

## Integrative Biology Graduate Application: Detailed Information

### Is it necessary to contact prospective mentors before applying?

We **highly** encourage prospective applicants to review our list of Research Active Faculty to determine which, if any, faculty here are doing research similar to your interests. (Visit our [directory](#), then in the “Affiliation” drop-down menu, filter on Research Active Faculty.) Email those who may be a good fit.

### When should I start contacting prospective major professors?

The ideal time is usually mid-May through September of the year before you’re seeking admission, but any time prior to the application deadline is still helpful.

### When is the application deadline?

IB’s online application opens in mid-September and closes on December 1 at 11:59 PM PST. For example, to apply for fall 2025 admission, you would apply between mid-September 2024 and December 1, 2024.

### How do I craft an email to a prospective major professor?

The subject line should clearly state the purpose of the email, such as “Prospective graduate student.”

Greet the recipient by title and last name, such as “Professor Smith” or “Dr. Smith.” If you write “Dear Esteemed Professor” or simply “Hello,” it looks as if you’re mass emailing to many faculty or universities.

Introduce yourself; state your current institution/major or where you earned your degree and in what major.

State your interest in applying for Integrative Biology for fall (*fill in year*); ask if they anticipate recruiting new students then. (Note: IB only accepts students to begin during fall term each year.)

Describe why you’re interested in working with that particular faculty member and their research (demonstrate that you’ve read some of their papers and have an understanding of their work); describe your experience, and how your abilities relate to their program. Let them know whether you’re interested in pursuing a MS or a PhD.

Close your email by asking to talk more with them about pursuing a graduate degree. Thank them for their consideration; sign off with your full name.

Attaching your CV is helpful (be sure to put your last name as part of the filename).

Use professional language, and proofread your message before sending.

If they don’t respond within 2 weeks, send a follow-up.

If you start communicating with a faculty member, and they seem to be a good fit for you, reach out to their current graduate students to ask about their research, the lab and IB community and what it's like being a graduate student.

#### **Does IB do lab rotations?**

No, IB doesn't do lab rotations. Students are accepted to work in a specific lab. Having co-major professors is possible, though not the norm. Therefore, identifying one or a few prospective major professors is a valuable part of putting together a successful application.

#### **Are there prerequisite courses for the IB graduate program?**

We do not have a specified list of prerequisites as this allows more flexibility in accepting students of varying backgrounds. Faculty members expect applicants to have a strong science and math background. The majority of our applicants have an undergraduate degree in life science, but that's not a requirement.

#### **Is a master's degree required prior to starting a doctoral program?**

No. Students with a bachelor's degree may apply directly to the Integrative Biology PhD program.

#### **Are students required to be on campus?**

The graduate program in Integrative Biology is designed for students to take courses, teach, and complete research as a member of the departmental community either on the Corvallis campus or at the Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport. We understand that some research activities may require travel, however, graduate students are generally expected to work at OSU facilities.

#### **Are Integrative Biology graduate students funded?**

Integrative Biology only accepts as many students as we can support as Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and/or Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs). (This applies to both PhD and MS students.) PhD students are required to teach a minimum of three terms, but most PhD and MS students teach more terms. Graduate Assistants (GAs) are employed at .40 FTE, which is an average of 16 hours per week. The typical teaching load is two in-person lab sections. GRA support is available only through grants to individual major professors.

During terms they're employed, both GRAs and GTAs receive a tuition waiver, 90% of mandatory fees are covered, the \$350 one-time matriculation fee will be paid, health insurance is provided. GAs also accrue and can use paid sick leave. In addition, students who paid a SEVIS and/or visa fee may receive a reimbursement up to \$500. Students who paid DACA fees may receive a reimbursement up to \$495. (A short application form and receipts are required for these reimbursements.)

If students are making satisfactory and timely progress, MS students will be supported for 2 years and PhD students for 5 years. Students may petition for extensions of time, if warranted.

IB guarantees support during the academic year. Summer support is usually available but not guaranteed.

For additional information, please refer to the [Integrative Biology Graduate Student Handbook](#).

### **How do I get letters of recommendation?**

The Oregon State Graduate School has helpful suggestions:

<https://gradschool.oregonstate.edu/admissions/process/suggestions-letters-reference>

### **Do letters of recommendation need to be received by the December 1 deadline?**

Ideally, yes. While letters of recommendation may be submitted after December 1, they should arrive within the following week. Faculty may start reviewing applications any time after December 1, so it's advantageous if your application is complete.

### **Should I submit official or unofficial transcripts?**

For our initial review, either one is fine. If accepted, you must supply official transcripts. We accept unofficial ones initially to help you avoid the cost of ordering official transcripts before you know if you're accepted. (An "unofficial transcript" is a photocopy of an official transcript and includes a transcript key, which is often on the last page or the back of each page. A web-generated transcript isn't an "unofficial transcript" and cannot be used for review or admission purposes.)

### **Are GRE scores required?**

No, GRE scores are optional.

### **When filling out my application, is there a list of areas of concentration from which I choose?**

There's no list; you may describe it in your own words. Try to limit it to just a few words, as you can elaborate on it in your statement(s).

### **Tips on writing statements:**

When writing about what you plan to study, be fairly focused on an area or two to show thought and commitment; listing many different and unrelated areas is typically not a successful approach. Discuss your past coursework and research experience and how that has shaped your interests and goals. Ideally, you have been communicating with one or more prospective major professors. Briefly discuss their research projects and how you and your desired research would fit into their lab. Express genuine interest and enthusiasm.

IB requires two statements as part of our application: 1) Academic and Research Statement and 2) Personal Statement. The prompts are posted on our [application information page](#).

### **How will my application be reviewed?**

Each faculty member who is recruiting a new student will review applications that list their name as a prospective mentor or that list their research concentration(s). Their review may begin

immediately after the December 1 deadline. By early January, they will rank their top applicants and begin communicating with them.

If departmental leadership green lights the faculty member to proceed with recruiting, the IB office will send the applicant a letter of offer. Once the applicant signs the letter, the Graduate School begins the formal admission process. This includes reviewing all the application documents and obtaining official transcripts if they weren't previously provided.

IB uses holistic admissions practices to evaluate each individual applicant. This means we consider and value multiple aspects of the person's lived experience, in addition to traditional measures of academic achievement. Using the application materials (CV/resume, transcripts, letters of recommendation, statements/essays), applicants are evaluated on:

- Academic Preparedness:
  - Undergraduate Curriculum
  - Grade Point Average
  - Academic Honors &/or Recognitions
- Research Preparedness:
  - Variety & Duration
  - Technical Skills
  - Research Products
  - Clarity of Interests
  - Motivation & Commitment
- Contribution to Program:
  - Community
  - Diversity
- Non-Cognitive Competencies
  - Achievement Orientation
  - Conscientiousness
  - Initiative & Leadership
  - Teamwork & Collaboration
  - Perseverance/Grit
  - Realistic Self-Appraisal

**Based on *Inside graduate admissions: Merit, diversity, and FACULTY GATEKEEPING*, by Julie Posselt (See this site: <https://gradschool.oregonstate.edu/faculty/holistic-admissions>)**

Faculty will communicate with applicants under consideration by phone, email, Zoom and/or in person. These discussions help determine if their lab and research seem like a good fit for you and the faculty member. Pursuing a MS takes 2-3 years to complete, while a PhD takes 5-6 years to complete, so you want to be confident in your decision.

### **How many students does IB accept?**

IB is a competitive program. We typically accept about 15% of our applicants. This is dependent upon the number of openings in the student's area of research interest and the number of teaching assistantships or research assistantships available, as well as the competitive evaluation of application materials.

**Is there a visit day for prospective graduate students?**

Yes, our recruitment day is typically in February. It is, however, by invitation only for applicants under consideration. Invited applicants may have received an offer, may have already signed an official offer, or may not yet have an offer.

**Are international application fee waivers available?**

The Oregon State University Graduate School does not offer international application fee waivers. However, Integrative Biology may be able to offer a limited number of them in certain circumstances. The prospective international applicant must contact a potential major professor in advance. If this faculty member is interested and wants to see the application, they will request a fee waiver on the applicant's behalf to the IB department leadership. This process may take some time, so please begin early.

**How do international students obtain travel documents?**

The Graduate School guides newly admitted international students through any additional steps that are needed, such as obtaining a visa. Once on campus, the [OSU Office of International Services](#) assists students with the hiring process.

**Is there assistance with expenses incurred in moving to Corvallis?**

No. Both domestic and international students are responsible for paying their own moving expenses.

**When will I hear the results of my application?**

Successful applicants may hear from faculty as early as January or as late as April. If any of our early offers aren't accepted, we may extend an offer to the next highest ranked applicant.

Waiting on decisions may lengthen our offer process. We plan to notify all applicants of their status by April 15.

**Apply for fellowships:**

Apply for fellowships, such as those offered by the [National Science Foundation](#). Investigate all relevant fellowships that are available. Your college or university should have a central clearinghouse for this information. If you are awarded a fellowship, it's more likely you'll be accepted into a graduate school of your choice. This is because a fellow is likely to be a good student and will require less financial support from the university.

**I've reviewed this document, but I have other questions, need clarification or want more information. Who should I contact?**

Please email the IB Graduate Coordinator, Traci Durrell-Khalife:  
[durrellt@science.oregonstate.edu](mailto:durrellt@science.oregonstate.edu)